



Contact: Pete Rimsans

Phone (317) 232-2683

402 West Washington Street

Room W195

Indianapolis, IN 46204

Fax (317) 233-3790

Indiana Department of Labor
Bureau of Child Labor

News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Labor Day: Reduced Work Hours, Shift in Education for Teens

Indianapolis, IN – The Indiana Department of Labor is reminding teens and their employers that Labor Day and the new school year brings reduced work hours for teens across the state. Both state and federal laws limit the number of hours teens may work during the school year. With this reduction also comes an educational shift from on-the-job-training to class room study. The department is urging teens to watch the number of hours that they are working and to seek out employers that are committed to putting education first.

Last December the Indiana Department of Labor joined the Restaurant and Hospitality Association of Indiana (RHA) in launching the Education First program. This program enlists employers that pledge to help teens make education their first priority. These are employers that have pledged to: offer flexible hours to accommodate the teen workers' school activities, coordinate late hours with teen workers and parents, work closely with the teen workers' schools to assure grades and attendance remain in good standing, provide a safe and healthy working environment for teen workers, and comply with all federal and state regulations that involve teen labor.

"We are pleased to see not only that these employers are providing a positive work experience, but that they are also committed to going above and beyond their duties to make education the first priority of their teen workers," said Pete Rimsans, Deputy

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Commissioner of the Bureau of Child Labor. "It is one thing to obey the child labor laws, but it's another to remember the importance of class room education"

According to John Livengood, President of the RHAI, "We are constantly trying to recruit the best candidates into the hospitality industry. We believe that by stressing the importance of education early in the work experience, we can help to develop the owners, managers, accountants, chefs, administrative personnel, and IT people of the future." Livengood pointed out that over 33% of all adults in the national workforce started their work experience in the restaurant and hospitality industry.

Studies have shown that on average teens that work up to 20 hours a week actually see improved grades. On the other hand, teens that work over 20 hours a week tend to have declining grades, and those that work close to 40 have a propensity to drop out. Parents, teens, and employers are encouraged to keep these trends in mind when making decisions about teen workers.

The department is reminding parents, teens, and employers that state and federal laws do regulate exactly how many hours teens may work. During the school year, 14 and 15 years olds may not work more than three hours a day and 18 hours a week; and they may not work after 7:00 p.m. Teenagers who are 16 or 17 years of age may not work more than 30 hours per week or eight hours per day. In general, 16 and 17 year-olds may not work later than 10:00 p.m. However, if the employer has written permission from the minor's parent, 16-year olds may work until midnight on nights not followed by a school day and 17-year olds may work until 1:00 a.m. on no more than two nights per week. Also, all teens working six or more consecutive hours are also required by law to receive a 30-minute rest break.

For more information about Indiana's teen work laws or the Education First program call 1-888 TEEN WORK or log onto www.teenworker.org. Information about becoming an Education First employer can be found at www.indianarestaurants.org/EducationFirst.asp.